did not again come into contact with the enemy. We were occasionally shifted from one place to another, as the safety of the communications of the army required. We led, therefore, a rather dull life, but that period is especially memorable to me, because it was there that I committed a breach of discipline for which I might have been—and perhaps ought to have been —cashiered.

The case was this: A private in one of my regiments had been tried by court-martial for desertion, and, according to law, sentenced to death. I was directed to see to the execution of that sentence, for which a special day was appointed. It was reported to me that the culprit was a mere boy, who had been seduced to desert by two older men, bad characters, who succeeded in getting away, while he was caught. I was also informed that he had been in the custody of my provost-guard on the battlefield of Gettysburg, and I had an idea that if a soldier sentenced to death was brought under the fire of the enemy again, he was, according to military custom, relieved of that mortal sentence and entitled at least to some commutation of it. I went to see the poor fellow, and found him to be a young Bohemian, a remarkably handsome lad of hardly more than eighteen, who looked at me with the honest eyes of a child. He told me his side of the story of his desertion in a simple way, confirming what I had heard of his being taken with, them by two much older

comrades, and that he did not know how serious a thing it was, and how he had intended to come back* and how he would try to -die bravely if die he must—but his mother—oh, his mother! The poor woman was a widow, and lived in >New York. She was not alone, and not destitute, but she loved him much, and would miss him dreadfully.

I at once made up my mind that, in spite of my orders, I